

Zion's Herald.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1892.

[Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.]

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\$1.00.

SPECIAL OFFER.

ZION'S HERALD will be sent to new subscribers from the first of April to the first of October for

\$1.00.

TO THE FRONT.

This offer is made in order that those who are not now readers of the paper may have the privilege of thoroughly examining it; also that many more of our people may be induced to follow the proceedings of the coming General Conference, which will be fully reported in our columns. The session will be unusually interesting and important in results. Will our ministers and readers, therefore, make known to our people generally that they can secure ZION'S HERALD for six months for

\$1.00?

TO THE FRONT.

The attitude of the church towards contemporary problems has always been unfortunate in one respect — it is too faithful adherence to old and outgrown methods. Like some old-fashioned dame who still pushes her needle through miles of linen and calico, or cooks her wholesome New England dinners over a bed of coals in the fire place, the church has ever striven to meet the new need, the need of the age, with the old equipment. When the call came for missionaries in heathen lands, the church sent forth men equipped with creeds, ceremonies, ordinances and ecclesiastical conventionalities, whereas the nations lying in darkness needed not so much to be proselyted as to be met upon a common ground of human brotherhood, with a recognition of good, if any there was in their own religions, and an endeavor to incorporate it into the new, fuller and final truth; but it is not until the present hour that the church is beginning to arrive at the conviction that this is the true method of evangelizing heathen nations.

At home, the church has been trying to help the masses by the exercise of a lofty charity and gloved condescension, when the masses needed love, brotherhood and sympathy. So, too, our religious apologists have been fighting science and infidelity with antiquated and inefficient weapons. All along it has been the old equipment confronting the new need — the church militant shaking its bludgeon at the Krupp gun.

But the time has now surely come to inaugurate a new era in the life of the church. What we need to-day is a church that can meet contemporary problems with contemporary methods; a church to which each new need of the age shall suggest some fresh and adequate method of meeting that need. We want a church that can attack the social problems of the present time with something more modern and effective than tracts and soup-houses. We want a church whose home missionaries shall be earnest scientific students of present economic conditions, and whose foreign missionaries shall take with them, not only Bibles and catechisms, but schools, machinery, books, pictures and trades. The best evangelists, either at home or abroad, are the men who are most in touch with the spirit of the present age.

To keep step with the time and the opportunity, is the need of the church to-day. Let her overcome the old habit of being always a step behind the opportunity — always meeting, or trying to meet, the new need with the old equipment. Why should Christianity be the one great factor in modern civilization whose significance is entirely that of the past? As the church of to-day has emancipated herself from superstition and credal bondage, so let her emancipate herself from the hampering conservatism of out-grown methods, by putting herself in touch with the progressive spirit of the age.

PERSONALS.

Hon. Alden Speare and wife have returned from several weeks of pleasant and interesting travel in Mexico.

Rev. I. W. Newell was ordained elder at the late session of the N. E. Conference.

Rev. I. G. Ross was thoughtful and alert in the entertainment of the Maine Conference.

The excellent article by Rev. J. D. Pickles on our second page, is just now especially apropos.

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Rev. C. J. Fowler, of Grace Church, Haverhill, made thoughtful and generous arrangements for the accommodation of the N. H. Conference.

Rev. Geo. E. Smith, who has just closed a highly successful pastorate at St. Albans, and who has been assistant secretary of the Vermont Conference for many years, took a superannuated relation at the late session, and will spend the year in visiting throughout the West.

Rev. Dr. W. A. Spencer shows, upon the first page, that our Methodism was never more aggressive and successful than at the present hour.

Rev. C. A. Dickinson, of Berkley Temple, has outlined a project which he proposes to carry out in Westminster, Vt. He has opened the old Goodrich House, and will use it as a summer home for working girls connected with his congregation. There will be from seventy-five to a hundred there during the summer. The cost to the girls will be only about \$7. The remainder will be made up by wealthy ladies of his congregation.

At an annual meeting of the Massachusetts Homeopathic Medical Society, held April 13, Dr. Liberty D. Packard was elected president for the current year. Dr. Packard is a leading member of St. John's Church in South Boston, and is well known as one of the Methodists of this vicinity, not only for his skill as a physician, but also for his sterling qualities as a man. The church is honored in the honor so worthily bestowed upon him.

Rev. W. R. Webster, of Suncook, N. H., settled at Conference for every subscriber to ZION'S HERALD upon his charge; and he had, moreover, made a large increase of new subscribers.

Rev. Frederick Woods found on his step, the night before Easter, a box containing rare flowers and crisp United States certificates — a welcome gift from some of his young people at the beginning of his third year among them.

The appreciation in which Rev. S. Donaldson, the retiring presiding elder of St. Johnsbury District, Vermont Conference, is held by his preachers, is evidenced by the elegant gold watch which was presented to him Friday forenoon by Rev. P. N. Granger in behalf of the preachers.

Bishop Goodsell's address at the Maine Conference to the young men to be received on trial, was especially able and inspiring.

"The ignorant man in our ministry," he said, "is the doomed man."

Rev. C. E. Rogers, of the N. H. Conference, left in his will seven sets of valuable books to be distributed, by a committee appointed by the Conference, among the most indigent young men entering that body.

The honored veteran corps was well represented at the session of the New Hampshire Conference by Revs. James Pike, O. H. Jasper, James Thurston, L. L. Eastman, Rufus Tilton, and C. M. Dimmire.

Professor Huxley says: "For the time I first procured a visiting card it has borne 'Mr. T. H. Huxley.' But I have no objection to the 'Huxley.' But the only thing I cannot stand is 'Doctor.'"

The Christian public will be delighted to know that Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler has consented to publish a volume of his sermons. He is now preparing them for the press, and the book will soon appear.

Ex-Gov. Claffin has returned from the South where he has spent most of the winter, and was observed on Sunday as an interested listener to Dr. Mansfield's first and excellent sermon in Bromfield St. Church.

The venerable Peter Merrill, whose form and voice have been familiar to all visitors to the Vermont Conference for nearly half a century, a letter received shows — what all his friends long since knew — that his heart is still warm toward his brethren and his faith still undimmed in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In his experience it is true that at evening time it is light.

Dr. Samuel S. Curry, instructor in elocution at Harvard and in the Newton Theological Seminary, and principal of the School of Expression at Boston, has been elected instructor in elocution at the Yale Divinity School.

Our Bishop Fitzgerald was afflicted, while presiding at the session of the East German Conference, in the death of his venerable father, who passed away at Newark, N. J. His father had been an honored and useful member of the Methodist Church for sixty years.

There is no pleasanter and more inviting place in which to hold a session of the Vermont Conference than in Montpelier, but Pastor Hough knew how to make the most of hospitable homes and a delightful environment.

Rev. L. L. Hanscom, of Sioux Falls, S. D., has been called East by the death of his son Frank, aged 16 years, who passed away in Milford, Conn., at his aunt's house, March 31. The son has been an invalid from his infancy, the result of a severe attack of diphtheria in Dexter, Maine. Death came as a happy release.

After ten years of service, Rev. J. D. Beeman retires from the presidency of the Vermont Methodist Seminary. During this time he has raised the institution from the verge of bankruptcy to a position of financial credit and literary prestige, and has made its coffers richer by upwards of \$90,000. Vermont Methodism will forever remain a debtor to his arduous and well directed labors for the institution so dear to her members.

The marriage at Lawrence, on Wednesday evening, April 13, of Dr. Adelbert M. Hubbell, of Haverhill, to Miss Annie S. Moore, at the residence of the bride in the former city, was an informal but very pleasant and happy event. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Charles Parkhurst, D. D., a large number of intimate friends were present. The wedding gifts were many and valuable. The newly-married couple commenced housekeeping at once in Haverhill, where Dr. Hubbell has a large and lucrative practice.

In the election of ex-Gov. Dillingham to the General Conference, Vermont Methodist laymen did themselves honor. The stainless name bequeathed to him by his father, who was a member of the first General Conference to which laymen were admitted, his own inimitable integrity, his wide experience in deliberative bodies, his eminent legal training, and his unwavering loyalty to the spiritual interests of the church, will render him a valuable member of that body, and will give prestige to the Vermont delegation.

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Lady Somerset sailed from New York on the "Teutonic," last week Wednesday, for her English home. She was accompanied by her only child, a son, nineteen years of age. The influences for good which this noble woman has set in motion during her brief stay in our country, have been of incalculable value. She carries back with her the best and tenderest wishes of hosts of friends.

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The Sunday School.

SECOND QUARTER. LESSON V.

Sunday, May 1.

REV. W. O. HOLWAY, U. S. N.

THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

1. Preliminary.

1 GOLDEN TEXT: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51: 10).

2. DATE: about N. C. 1034.

3. PLACE: Jerusalem.

4. PARALLEL NARRATIVE: 2 Samuel, chapters 11 and 12.

5. HOME READINGS: Monday — Psalm 51: 13-15. Tuesday — Psalm 51: 14-19. Wednesday — Ex. 29: 5-15. Thursday — Nehemiah 1. Friday — Luke 18: 9-14. Saturday — Luke 15: 11-24. Sunday — Psalm 32: 1-7.

6. CIRCUMSTANCES: This Psalm is one of the seven, which, since Origen's time, have been known as the "Penitential Psalms." The occasion for it is stated in the superscription, and the historical account is found in 2 Samuel. It is noteworthy that David's terrible fall occurred about N. C. 1034, when he had reigned about twenty years, and when, by reason of advancing age, he would naturally have little cause to fear the uprising of lustful passions. In a wonderful career of conquest he had humbled the foes of his kingdom, and enlarged his borders. Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, and Edomites had been successively subdued, and the bounds of the promised land fully occupied, Phenicia, a friendly province, alone excepted. The internal administration of the kingdom had been wisely adjusted, and the religious institutions and ceremonies firmly established. So secure did David feel in his power, that he entrusted the conduct of the campaign against the Ammonites, who had revolted, to Joab, and remained himself in Jerusalem. Here, one evening, while walking on the roof of his palace, his eye chanced to fall upon the form of a woman who was bathing in the court of a neighboring house; and from that moment the fever of his passion gave him no rest until it plunged him into the blackest abyss of crime, and forever stained his name. He learned that the name of the woman was Bathsheba; that she was the granddaughter of his counsellor, Ahithophel, and the wife of one of his "thirty mighty men," Uriah the Hittite, who was away at the front of the battle with Joab. "Such a discovery might have deterred a *kosten despot*," says Dr. William Smith, "but David fell."

Ah, deeper dole!

That so angel a spirit, shrined so fair, Should from the starry session of his peers Decline, to quench so bright a brilliance In Hell's sick spouse!

We have not space here to pursue the drama of lust and blood — to tell how adultery was followed by murder, and the double crime by Divine re-buke and punishment. In the burning confessions of this Psalm we have the clearest portrayal of the anguish of a guilt-burdened soul pleading for pardon and peace.

The cold northern wind still blows, and the cold northern sky is still overcast; but the sun is still bright, and the birds are still singing. The children are still at play, and the flowers are still in bloom. The world is still beautiful, and the world is still full of hope and promise.

It is evident (see verse 14) that this Psalm was written some months after David's first act of transgression, when Uriah had been exposed by his order to the sally of the Ammonites, and had fallen, "in happy ignorance of his sovereign's guilt and his own wrongs."

During this period, which may have been protracted to nearly a year (compare the superscription of this Psalm with the account of Nathan's interview, in 2 Samuel 12, especially verses 11 and 15), David tasted the full bitterness of a heart alienated from God, and felt daily, in an accusing conscience, what Juvenal calls "the scourge of the soundless lash." Very foul and black must his double crime have looked to him when placed side by side with the purity of his life hitherto.

"This is ever than her character,"

which is a clump of trees that have enclosed themselves on this imminently, bending sea-beasts strike by careless feet, meandering ways and paths, and Pines that we borders; for, in ding dog, we us companions; the edified, in most in-departure them."

er on "Reclaim-

the face of nature arches like Neb- the air in a few ays, in a the aid of forty- ays, in a few ays; of an empire at ely Nature's own extent, and in- extent, and in- ferments being inter- say that his own- er, and must be re-

ster, and read the script of the sun in the dawning in the evening. She closes, saying

that evanescent, that at its distinction, "dead" haunts many a memory, and makes forever a mark upon the earth, and silent. The rocky base at wide other to the crest, and the silent. The rocky base at wide

No notion of sight, and the silent. The rocky base at wide

completely, and leave no guilt upon my soul." It is not the punishment he cries out against, but the sin. Many a murderer is more ashamed at the gallows than the murderer which brought him to the prison. Not so David; he is sick of sin as sin; his loudest outcries are against the evil of his transgression, and not against the painful consequences of it (Spurgeon).

3. For — connective, and telling why he prayed: I ask for mercy because I acknowledge, because I keep nothing back. I acknowledge — I am deeply sensible of it. I make a clean breast of it. Regretfully, freely, without any attempt at excuse or extenuation, I confess myself guilty. There is something noble in this confession — in its sincerity, its humility, its unshrinking directness of statement. *My sin is ever before me.* — David had not tried to drug his conscience, nor sophisticate it so that it should call evil good; and, therefore, he was compelled

"to ever be a sinner."

A silent court of justice in himself; Himself the judge and jury, and himself The prisoner at the bar ever condemned."

4. Against this only. — David had been accustomed heretofore to set the Lord always before him, that, in his overwhelming conviction of the wrong he had done to God, he might lose sight of the human bearing of his sin. Says Barnes: "His crime against Uriah and his family was of the deepest and most aggravated character; but still the offence derived its chief heinousness from the fact that it was a violation of the law of God." *In thy sight.* — So said the prodigal (Luke 15: 21). *That thou mightest* (R. V., "mayest") *be justified.* — Dr. Murphy pronounced this to be the terrible judgments pronounced on David's house by Nathan (2 Sam. 12: 10, 11), and paraphrased thus: "This confession I sincerely make, to justify the judgment pronounced by Nathan, and Thy dealings with me."

5. Behold, I was shapen, etc. — This verse contains the only explanation, or approach to an excuse, which the royal sinner makes: I did not start pure; I came from a sinful race; depravity was present at my very birth; my parents, tainted like the rest of mankind, could not beget a pure offspring — illustration of what is commonly called the doctrine of original sin (see Job 1: 4).

David's mother was the Lord's handmaid; he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father; and he was himself the man "after God's own heart"; and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact (Spurgeon).

6. Behold, thou desirest truth, etc. — As much as to say: And yet, though I was born depraved, though my nature at the very core is corrupt, Thou desirest purity and truth just there — in the heart itself, in the fountain whence are the issues of life. No outward varnish will do. The heart must be right in the sight of God, and He must make it right. *Know wisdom.* — Christ is called "the Wisdom of God;" to know him is to know wisdom. Says Cowles: "This verse gives us God's standard of holiness — His ideas of what it really is. Consequently the opposite of this is sin."

7. Behold, — The word is used to indicate the attainment of a new and higher knowledge, as if it had come with something of surprise on the mind. Lo! I have seen sin as I never saw it before! Lo! I have learned that that is what Thou desirest in the secret heart (Perowne).

8. Purge me with hyssop. — The hyssop branch was used to sprinkle the sacrificial blood (Ex. 12: 22). "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). That blood symbolized the sacrifice of Him who was "once offered to bear the sins of many." To be purged with hyssop, then, signified an efficacious heart-cleansing. Luther renders it, "Unsin me with hyssop." *Whiter than snow.* — This cleansing blood leaves no stain behind. The whitest, blackest heart to which the bLOOD is applied, is turned snow-white — even whiter than snow.

9. Make me to hear joy and gladness — which could come only through forgiveness. *Bones . . . broken may rejoice* — a very forcible image to express the utterly crushed, helpless, prostrate condition in which David found himself. His whole inner self was dislocated, fractured, and racked with torture, under the smiting of conscience and God's law. He longed to have the aches cease, the articulations reknit, and to feel the joy of restoration and soundness once more. Says Cowles: "Whatever took hold of the soul, the Hebrew thought and spoke of as felt in the bones."

10. Hide thy face from my sins — which could come only through forgiveness. *Bones . . . broken may rejoice* — a very forcible image to express the utterly crushed, helpless, prostrate condition in which David found himself. His whole inner self was dislocated, fractured, and racked with torture, under the smiting of conscience and God's law. He longed to have the aches cease, the articulations reknit, and to feel the joy of restoration and soundness once more. Says Cowles: "Whatever took hold of the soul, the Hebrew thought and spoke of as felt in the bones."

11. Cast me not away — reject me not, though I deserve it, from communion with you. *Take not thy Holy Spirit.* — David, of course, had narrower views than we, by a fuller revelation, bold of the personality, power and graces of the Holy Spirit; but it would be a violent supposition to imagine that the inspired writer of the Psalms knew not by experience the sweetness of His indwelling, and did not feel most keenly the deprivation of His presence.

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13. Then will I teach, etc. — The saved make the best teachers. The forgiven are eloquent in persuading others to seek the same grace. The warm glow often recently converted, or restored, or illumined, heart aches an influence which is well-nigh irresistible.

14. Wash me thoroughly — as though I teach transgressors thy ways — that when I am, have committed helots. Such a desire is one of the surest signs of spiritual repentance (Cook). Doubtless this Psalm, and the whole story of David, have produced for many ages the most important results in the conversion of transgressors; and so well has been overruled for good (Spurgeon).

15. Wash, painf, kidneys, etc. — The Hebrew implies a longing: I would fain teach transgressors thy ways — that when I am, have committed helots. Such a desire is one of the surest signs of spiritual repentance (Cook). Doubtless this Psalm, and the whole story of David, have produced for many ages the most important results in the conversion of transgressors; and so well has been overruled for good (Spurgeon).

16. Infernal. — The Devil is the sole author of all sin, whether of high or low degree, should pray. Justice condemns; the only refuge then is in God's mercy. *Loving-kindness* — a beautiful and intensified expression for God's crowning attribute. *Multitude . . . tender mercies.* — David remembered these now in the depth to which he had fallen. He had been a signal object, as with an asp (1 Sam. 16: 14; 2 Kings 24: 12). The order followed as soon as he had been "a man after God's own heart." What language can then describe his suffering and self-reproach in these months of dreary alienation? *Blot out.* — Erase the dark record; let it no longer stand; let it be concealed with love divine;

Perfect, and right, and good.

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19. Great sin call for great grace. — The Devil is the sole author of all sin, whether of high or low degree, should pray. Justice condemns; the only refuge then is in God's mercy. *Loving-kindness* — a beautiful and intensified expression for God's crowning attribute. *Multitude . . . tender mercies.* — David remembered these now in the depth to which he had fallen. He had been a signal object, as with an asp (1 Sam. 16: 14; 2 Kings 24: 12). The order followed as soon as he had been "a man after God's own heart." What language can then describe his suffering and self-reproach in these months of dreary alienation? *Blot out.* — Erase the dark record; let it no longer stand; let it be concealed with love divine;

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22. Though our sins outnumber the hairs of our head, we cannot outnumber the multitude of God's tender mercies.

3. Every sin, primarily, is committed against God.

4. "None but a child of God cares for the eye of God" (Spurgeon).

5. Sin must be cast out, by repentance and renunciation, or it will cast us out.

7. "Twas great to speak a word from naught. "Twas greater to redeem."

8. External rites can never be substituted for repentance.

9. We should bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Illustrative.

1. It is a striking distinction of the Bible that, while it dismisses in a few verses the story of David's victories, which, if won by an Egyptian or Assyrian monarch, would have been the greatest of their chroniclers, it dwells at great length on the lesson of his sins.

2. "I was given to sin, but I was born to be saved." — So said the prodigal (Luke 15: 21). *That thou mightest* (R. V., "mayest") *be justified.* — Dr. Murphy pronounced this to be the terrible judgments pronounced on David's house by Nathan (2 Sam. 12: 10, 11), and paraphrased thus: "This confession I sincerely make, to justify the judgment pronounced by Nathan, and Thy dealings with me."

3. Behold, I was shapen, etc. — This verse contains the only explanation, or approach to an excuse, which the royal sinner makes: I did not start pure; I came from a sinful race; depravity was present at my very birth; my parents, tainted like the rest of mankind, could not beget a pure offspring — illustration of what is commonly called the doctrine of original sin (see Job 1: 4).

4. Behold, thou desirest truth, etc. — As much as to say: And yet, though I was born depraved, though my nature at the very core is corrupt, Thou desirest purity and truth just there — in the heart itself, in the fountain whence are the issues of life. No outward varnish will do. The heart must be right in the sight of God, and He must make it right. *Know wisdom.* — Christ is called "the Wisdom of God;" to know him is to know wisdom. Says Cowles: "This verse gives us God's standard of holiness — His ideas of what it really is. Consequently the opposite of this is sin."

5. Purge me with hyssop. — The hyssop branch was used to sprinkle the sacrificial blood (Ex. 12: 22). "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). That blood symbolized the sacrifice of Him who was "once offered to bear the sins of many." To be purged with hyssop, then, signified an efficacious heart-cleansing. Luther renders it, "Unsin me with hyssop." *Whiter than snow.* — This cleansing blood leaves no stain behind. The whitest, blackest heart to which the blood is applied, is turned snow-white — even whiter than snow.

6. Make me to hear joy and gladness — which could come only through forgiveness.

7. Bones . . . broken may rejoice — a very forcible image to express the utterly crushed, helpless, prostrate condition in which David found himself. His whole inner self was dislocated, fractured, and racked with torture, under the smiting of conscience and God's law. He longed to have the aches cease, the articulations reknit, and to feel the joy of restoration and soundness once more. Says Cowles: "Whatever took hold of the soul, the Hebrew thought and spoke of as felt in the bones."

8. Hide thy face from my sins — which could come only through forgiveness.

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